



A youth opening his gifts at the 2007 Kal's Kristmas luncheon



One of the bikes and some of the gifts given as part of Kal's Kristmas 2007.

Santa Makes an Early Visit to the Bureau of Juvenile Justice via Kal's Kristmas

Whitmore Lake, Michigan

For the sixth year running, the staff of the Bureau of Juvenile Justice (BJJ) Whitmore Lake Training Center sponsored a holiday program for youths. The program was the brainchild of former BJJ staffer Calvin Holt. Calvin believed it was important to model care and concern to our youths rather than just speak to them about such pro-social attributes. The program had no name; it was an informal effort on Calvin's part as he sought to provide "a little something under the tree" for the youths at one of the Bureau's community halfway houses (now called Community Justice Centers or CJC's). Tragically, Calvin was killed in an automobile accident on his way home to Southfield after a day-long meeting in Lansing on August 9, 2006. Calvin was most recently employed in the Bureau's Education Services Unit as an educational consultant. Beyond being one of those employees that came to work every day with a positive focus on his work and those we serve, Calvin volunteered personal time to tutor youths placed in the Bureau's treatment facilities. He also completed his Ph.D. in education at Wayne State University in June 2006.

As the 2006 holiday season approached, Calvin's friends and co-workers at the training center decided that they wanted to continue Calvin's holiday giving and the effort was christened "Kal's Kristmas". The first

Kal's Kristmas (2006) closely resembled the previous four years in that one CJC was selected for sponsorship. This year, staff challenged themselves and Kal's Kristmas sponsored all 39 youths placed in the bureau's four CJC's (located in Bay City, Flint, Kalamazoo, and Lansing). Donations came from across the bureau's administrative units and from several external "Secret Santas". The youths and their staff were served a luncheon at the Whitmore Lake Training Center on Friday, December 14 and gifts were distributed.

In addition to the gifts, two reconditioned mountain bikes with helmets were raffled off and given to a youth each at Parmenter House (Bay City) and Flint House. The bike raffle was possible due to the efforts of a BJJ staffer who is also a mountain biking enthusiast and has managed to help one of the bureau's northern facilities to establish a bike maintenance and repair component to their vocational education program. The real value of these bikes is realized when you know that one of the biggest challenges for CJC youths attempting to establish their independence is overcoming transportation gaps. A mountain bike is a viable means of getting to work – even during Michigan winters.